

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 30, 2020

Chairman Peter A. DeFazio
Transportation & Infrastructure Committee
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Ranking Member Sam Graves
Transportation & Infrastructure Committee
2164 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Chairwoman Grace F. Napolitano
Subcommittee on Water Resources
& Environment
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Ranking Member Bruce Westerman
Subcommittee on Water Resources
& Environment
2164 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Via electronic correspondence.

Dear Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves, Subcommittee Chair Napolitano, and Ranking Subcommittee Member Westerman:

Thank you for your work to gather requests for proposed projects, studies, and policies for the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2020.

As you work to finalize WRDA 2020 authorizations, we respectfully request that you include language to streamline approval processes for projects authorized as part of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) approved by Congress in WRDA 2000.¹ Allowing the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to consider individual projects that are part of a larger umbrella project, such as the CERP, as ongoing activities would eliminate the need for a separate congressional authorization for each project and ensure a more timely and predictable completion of such projects for our communities. Additionally, this would eliminate the need for conditionally approved projects from competing with other USACE projects for funding and congressional authorization.

In the case of South Florida, each project authorized as part of the CERP provides greater ecosystem and water supply benefits, undoubtedly ensuring South Florida's economic and ecosystem health. The CERP's conditionally authorized 68 projects, such as the Loxahatchee River Watershed Restoration Project (LRWRP), must await additional congressional authorization and subsequent appropriations before construction may begin, which prevents USACE from beginning crucial projects that restore the quantity, quality, timing, and distribution of water to improve ecosystem health and other demands. Additionally, several

¹ Public Law 106-541.

CERP projects seek to improve water storage in South Florida, which is central to many communities as freshwater sources are threatened by the immense growth of the population, threatening already precarious infrastructure and resources, and by salt water intrusion into aquifers as they keep up with growing demand. South Floridians, and the nation, deserve the benefits of Everglades restoration, and allowing these projects to proceed as part of the conditionally authorized CERP will expedite USACE's important work restoring one of our national treasures.

With this in mind, we respectfully propose the following language:

Section 601(d) of the Water Resources Development Act of 2000 (Public Law 106-541; 114 Stat. 2684) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by inserting “and subject to paragraph (3)” after “subsection (b) or (c)”;
and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

“(3) EXPEDITED PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION.—After completing a project implementation report prepared in accordance with subsections (f) and (h), the Secretary may carry out, without any further congressional authorization—

“(A) any project identified in the Plan for which a project implementation report is completed that is in accordance with an integrated delivery schedule approved by the Chief of Engineers and the South Florida Water Management District, in consultation with the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force, if the report is completed not later than 5 years after the date of enactment of this paragraph; and

“(B) any group of projects under the Plan that the Secretary determines will provide regional or watershed ecosystem or water supply benefits if the group of projects is constructed in accordance with a project implementation report approved by the Chief of Engineers and the South Florida Water Management District, in consultation with the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force, not later than 5 years after the date of enactment of this paragraph.”

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

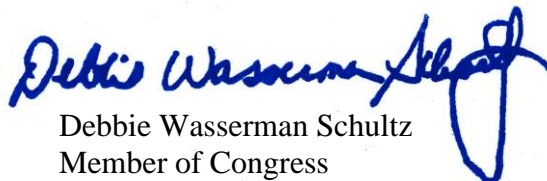
Sincerely,



Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress



Mario Diaz-Balart
Member of Congress



Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress